

*Notes on several Arabic and Persian Inscriptions.—By H. BLOCHMANN,
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This paper contains notes on several Arabic and Persian inscriptions which in the course of the year were either sent to the Society by various members, or were obtained by myself. I trust the members will continue to forward rubbings or copies of inscriptions to the Society, and I would especially draw their attention to old Mosques and the Dargáhs of Muhammadan saints. Shrines are rarely without inscriptions; but although almost every town in Upper India and Bengal has, if I may say so, its patron saint, few of the inscriptions and the legends regarding them have hitherto been collected. Bengal and Bihár inscriptions are doubly welcome, as they help us to fill up gaps in Bengal history.

The inscriptions mentioned in the paper refer to

Bardwán,

Gaur,

Aṭak,

The Márgalah Pass,

Majherah, Muzuffarnagar, N. W. P. and

Barelí,

and will, I hope, be of some interest for Indian readers.

Bardwa'n.

The following inscription is taken from the 'Dargáh,' or tomb, of the Poet Bahrám Saqqá, or as he is called in Bardwán, on account of his saintly character, Pír Bahrám. The Dargáh is one of the historical sights of Bardwán.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

یا اللہ یا فتاح یا اللہ یا فتاح یا اللہ لا اِلهَ اِلاَّ اللہ محمد رسول
اللہ حقاً

زہ درویش عالم گشت بہرام * کہ در عرفان دلے او بسکہ دریا
ز عالم رفت در راہ سراندیپ * شد از ملک فدا بہرام دافا
حساب سال فوت آن یگانہ * زحق کردیم چون فتح تمنا

ندا آمد که تاریخ وفاتش * بود درویش ما بهرام سقا
۹۸۲

O God, O Opener, O God, Opener !

There is no God but Allah ; Muhammad is the Prophet of God, in truth.

Well done, Darwîsh Bahrâm, who hast travelled over the world, whose heart in knowledge is like the ocean.

He left the world on his way to Ceylon ; Bahrâm Saqqá left the transitory realm.

We reflected on the year in which this great man died, and, in fulfilment of our wishes,

A voice came from heaven, announcing that the chronogram of his death lies in the words '*Buwad Darwîsh i má Bahrâm i Saqqá* 'our Darwîsh is Bahrâm Saqqá.' A. H. 982, or 1574.

This inscription is on a black stone, measuring about $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. by $1\frac{1}{2}$, and lies at the inner door of Bahrâm's shrine. The shrine is in Bardwán itself, about a mile from the Railway station, and looks like a little fortress. There are many tombs in the neighbourhood. A few steps lead through a low portico into the *çahn*, or open courtyard, of the shrine. On the right of the portico there is another inscription, which is, however, so defaced, that it is impossible to read it. The tomb itself is in a low vault, and is quite plain. After entering the *çahn*, to the left, two tombs without inscriptions were pointed out to me as the resting-places of Sher Afkan and Quṭbuddín Khán. The former was Núr Jahán's first husband and Jágírdár of Bardwán ; he killed Quṭbuddín, the Governor of Bengal, who had received orders from Jahángír to make away with him and conduct Núr Jahán to the imperial harem.* The meeting of Sher Afkan and Quṭbuddín took place, according to the tradition, at Sádhipúr, which lies east of the Railway station, on a field where a tomb now is. The field to this day is called *Ganj i Shahídán*, 'the place of the martyrs.' Whether the tombs in the courtyard are really those of Sher Afkan and Quṭbuddín, is doubtful, notwithstanding the tradition ; for Jahángír says in his 'Memoirs' that Quṭbuddín's body was taken to Fathpúr Síkrí and buried there.

It is also said that Akbar granted a daily allowance of Rs. 2 to

* For full accounts of Sher Afkan, Núr Jahán, and Quṭbuddín, *vide* Aín translation, pp. 497, 509, 524.

the Mutawallís in charge of the tomb, and that the Government pays Rs. 40 *per mensem* for the same purpose.

Bahrám Saqqá is one of the best poets of Akbar's reign. Abul-fazl mentions him in the *Aín* (text, p. 250). He was of Turkish extraction, and belonged to the Biyát tribe, which is chiefly found in Erivan, and scattered over Azarbáiján, Tahrán, Níshápúr, and Fárs.* He pretended to have seen the prophet Khizr (Elias), and wandered about as a water-carrier (*saqqá*), supplying the poor with water. Badáoní (III, 243) says—"He belongs to the followers of Shaikh Jámí Muhammad of Khabúshán (near Níshápúr), and was *majzúb*, *i. e.* attracted by God. He wandered about in the streets of Agra with several of his pupils, and distributed water gratis among the poor, composing at the same time verses 'as pure as water.' Once a descendant of his spiritual guide came to India, and he gave him all he possessed. He was fond of independence, and went to Ceylon, but died on the road. It is said that in that land of infidelity (Ceylon), there was a man to whom the Prophet appeared in a dream ordering him to shroud and bury Bahrám, which was done. He composed several *díwáns*; but when he was in religious ecstasy, he washed the ink off his papers, one after the other; but the collection of poems still extant is by no means small."

The author of the *Haft Iqlím* says that when Bahrám was lying dead on his *chárpaí*, a person appeared and said to Bahrám's companion that he had received orders from the Prophet to bury him.

According to the *Mir át ul 'Álam*, it was his pupils that collected his poems, and saved the *Díwán* which still exists; else he would have destroyed his whole collection. He died in A. H. 1000, on his way to Ceylon.

I am doubtful as to the correct year in which Bahrám died; for in the above inscription the word *buwad*, according to the rules of *tárikhs*, does not belong to the chronogram itself, and this would give 970 A. H., or 1562-63, A. D., as the year of his death. But the Mutawallís of the Dargáh declare that he died in A. H. 982, or A. D., 1574.

* Notes on Persia, by Lt. Col. Monteith, Madras Journal, Vol. IV, for 1836, p. 28.

Dr. Sprenger also mentions him in his Catalogue of Oudh MSS. (p. 559). He calls him 'Darwīsh Saqqá of Bukhárá, and says he died in A. H. 962, quoting in support a chronogram from the *Nafáis ul Maásir* (metre, twice *maf'úlu fá'ilátun*), of which the last line is—

این گل چوزین چمن رفت پرسید آن ز تاریخ
گریبان بگفت سقا این باغ ماند بے ماء

When this rose left the rosebed, it asked for a chronogram,
And Saqqá replied weeping—"This garden is now left without water."

Dr. Sprenger finds the chronogram by subtracting *má* (*i. e.* 41) from *bágh* (1003), and thus gets A. H. 962. But this is against the rules of *tárikhs*, and we should, no doubt, read

آن باغ ماند بے ماء

and subtract *be má* (with the *hamzah*, as it means 'water' in allusion to Saqqá's employment), *i. e.* 54, from *án* (not *ín*) *bágh*, *i. e.*, 1054, which would give A. H. 1000, the date of the *Mir-át*. But whether this be correct or not, Sprenger's date of Bahrám's death (962) is impossible, as Bahrám Saqqá lived under Akbar, who only commenced to reign in 963.

Stewart in his History of Bengal (p. 216) calls him wrong 'Sháh *Ibráhím* Saqqá;' but he has the following interesting remark—"After this unexpected victory [over Rahím Sháh, in A. D. 1698] the prince 'Azím ushshán proceeded to the tomb of Shah Ibrahim Sukka in the vicinity of Burdwan, and having returned thanks to the Almighty for his success, he ordered a large sum of money to be distributed, in alms, to the poor and religious persons who attended on the shrine of the saint,"—adding in a footnote, "Shah Ibrahim Sukka was originally a water-carrier; but having associated with the Soofies, he became a celebrated author of poems and religious works. After his death he was canonized, and his tomb is still resorted to by pilgrims."

According to legends which I heard in Bardwán, Bahrám died at Bardwán after a stay of three days. His tomb is on a plot of ground which is said to have belonged to a Jogí of the name of Jaipál, who on seeing Bahrám's miracles, turned Muhammadan.

The following story was told me as a proof of Bahrám's greatness. After his arrival at Bardwán, he asked the Jogí, who lived near the present *dargáh*, at a place which is still pointed out, to give him a plot of ground ; but Jaípál, before granting the request, wished to see whether Bahrám could work miracles as he himself. Now it happened that the Jogí had just washed his dhotí, and having hung it up as high as the heaven to dry, he asked Bahrám to bring it down. Bahrám took off one of his wooden shoes, and said to it, "Go, child, fetch it down," when all at once it flew up and come back with the cloth. The Jogí was now convinced of Bahrám's power, and gave him the plot of ground.

The Jámí', or Jum'ah, Masjid of Bardwán was built by 'Azím ushshán,† the same prince who allowed the English to settle at Calcutta.

MSS. of Saqqá's Díwán are not numerous. There are two very fair ones in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Persian MSS., Nos. 251, 365). I also saw several in Bardwán. The poems are fine, and mostly of a religious nature ; they breathe a spirit of freedom and independence, and bespeak a mind that will not be burdened with the cares of this world. They fully establish the saintly character of the poet.

The following incident made a great impression on the Mujáwirs, or persons in charge of the tomb. I shewed them a copy of Saqqá's díwán, which I had made from the MS. in the Society's Library, and mentioned that the first half had been written by a young Muhammadan, an excellent *kátib*, who died of cholera before he had completed the copy. Strange to say, the last verse he wrote was the following—

حاصل دیدار حق شد چون جنید و بایزید * بر دو عالم هر که زد چون
رومی و عطار یوف

Let him enter the sight of God, like Junaid and Báyzíd, who like Rúmí and 'Attár†, despises the world.

* He was the third son of Sháh 'Alam Bahádur Sháh, and grandson of Aurangzib. His real name was Muhammad 'Azím. He attempted a *julús* on the 19th Muharram, 1124, and was drowned on the 19th Çafr of the same year.

† Four famous Muhammadan Saints. *Yof zadan*, to despise.

and the Mujáwirs were unanimous in declaring that saints did miracles even after death.

Gaur.

The Arabic inscriptions on Pl. IV and V refer to the building of a mosque in Gaur by one Sikandar Khán, in A. H. 925, or 1519, A. D., during the reign of Husain Sháh, king of Bengal (*vide* Journal, 1870, Pt. I, p. 301, foot note).

The slabs were lately sent to the Indian Museum, Calcutta ; they measure about 3 ft. by 1½, and are of basalt.

Pl. IV merely contains a verse from the Qorán (Qorán, Sur. IX, 18, and Journal for 1870, Pt. I., p. 293). Plate V has the following—

يا الله

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من بني مسجدا لله بني الله بيتا في الجنة *
 بني هذا المسجد في عهد السلطان (sic) علاو الدنيا والدين ابوالمظفر حسين
 شاه السلطان خلد الله ملكه وسلطانه وبانيه سكندر خان في سنة خمس وعشرين
 وتسعمائة ॥

The prophet (may God bless him!) says, 'He who builds a mosque for God, will have a house built for him by God in Paradise.'

This mosque was built in the reign of 'Aláuddunyá wad-dín Abul Muzaffar Husain Sháh, the king,—may God perpetuate his kingdom and his rule. The builder of it is Sikandar Khán. Dated A. H., 925, or 1519, A. D.

In the upper right hand corner of Pl. V are the words *yá fattáh*, 'O Opener!' and to the left, *yá wahháb*, 'O Giver!'

Pl. IV has on the top three circles with the words, *yá allah*, O God, *yá fattáh*, O Opener, and *يا بدوح* *yá buddúh*; and below them, two circles with *yá subbúh*, 'O praiseworthy one,' and *yá quddús*, O holy one.

The words *yá buddúh* require an explanation. The word *بدوح* *buddúh* is not found in our dictionaries, nor among the 'ninety-nine beautiful names of God.* But it often occurs on amulets, and is

* According to a tradition related by Abú Hurairah, God has 99 names, and he who reads them will enter paradise. The names are called *asmá i husna*, or 'beautiful names,' and are given in all prayer books. There also exist 99 epithets of Muhammad, 'Alí, and Fátimah. Even for saints tables of 99 names have been prepared. I have a MS. in which 'Abdul Qádir Gílání, Mu'ínuddín i Chishtí (the patron-saint of India), Faríd i Shakkarganj (buried in Pák Patan, Panjáb), and Nizámuddín Auliá of Dihlí, get each 99 names.

supposed to have a secret and deep meaning. The letters ب, د, و, ح, are the first four even numerals of the Shemitic Alphabet, and stand for 2, 4, 6, 8. When joined, they give بدوح, which is now looked upon as a mysterious name of God, and is pronounced *buddúh*, as if it was an adjective like *quddús*, *subbúh*, &c.

I have never before seen *buddúh* on a Mosque inscription.*

The two Arabic inscriptions on Pl. VII and VIII belong to the collection of Mr. A. Broadley, C. S., Bihár. As Mr. Broadley is about to publish in this Journal his whole collection, all particulars will be found in a future number. The plates are here given to enable the reader to compare them with Pl. IV and V, as they show all the varieties of the Tughrá character that occur in Bengal inscriptions, Pl. VII being the oldest (A. H. 640), and Pl. V (A. H. 925) one of the latest. Under the Mughuls, the Tughrá characters were discontinued, and the beautiful *nasta'liq* characters came in vogue, which the Kátibs of the 15th and 16th centuries had brought to perfection. Intermediate between Pls. V. and VII are the characters of the Sunnárgáon inscriptions of Fath Sháh in possession of General Cunningham, the upward strokes of which are unusually long in comparison with the bodies of the letters themselves. Pl. VII is a beautiful specimen of simple Tughrá-writing with arabesques, or *raihání khatt*, whilst on Pl. VIII particular attention has been paid to the *dawáir* or curves, there being a minimum of straight lines, as in the *Tauqí'* character (*Aín* translation, p. 100). Pl. VIII (A. H., 719) greatly resembles the

* Another mysterious word which I may mention here, is *يا كبيكج* *yá kabíkaj*.

It occurs on the fly-leaves of Indian MSS.; in fact Indian MSS. may often be recognized as such when bearing the phrase. I have never seen it on Persian MSS. *Yá kabíkaj* is generally three times repeated. Several Maulavís tell me that *Kabíkaj* is the name of an angel (مؤكل *muakkal*) who presides over insects, and that this angel is invoked by copyists to protect the MS. against white ants. A little Persian poem is also said to exist commencing with the words—

يا كبيكج مخور كتابم را

This explanation, whenever it was given, was accompanied by a denunciation of the practice as heathenish. It reminds one of the numerous angels of the Parsís. But it strikes me that a better solution of the mysterious word is to be found in the numerical value of the letters of *yá kabíkaj*, which when added give 66—the old familiar equivalent for *Allah* (ا + ل + م + ه = 66). This number occurs very frequently, even as a heading for letters, applications, &c.

Fírúz Sháh inscription at Tribení (Journal, A. S. Bengal, for 1870, p. 287) of A. H. 713.

A collection of such inscriptions may help us to clear up the difficult terms of Muhammadan calligraphy, of which so little is known. The art of painting was neglected by Muhammadans for religious reasons; and calligraphy which, to a certain extent, took its place, is hedged in by rules of proportion which are with difficulty learnt and appreciated. But it would be erroneous to believe that the characters used for inscriptions or coins, no matter how unusual they look, are the result of whim: a good *Kátib*, when in possession of a few characteristic letters of an inscription, can always from them complete the whole alphabet, and in the case of difficult inscriptions much time is saved, and much accuracy is gained, by first writing down the alphabet. It is also worth remembering that all *Ṭughrá* writing intends to be beautiful, not whimsical and obscure. On first commencing to read *Ṭughrá* inscriptions, I was often misled by a preconceived notion of an intentional obscurity of the characters, and was often inclined to believe that an upward stroke, for instance, belonged to two words and should be read twice. But *Ṭughrá*, as every other writing, expresses each letter fully.

I use the word *Ṭughrá*, as it is now-a-days used by Muhammadans in these parts of India, as a general terms for every kind of writing prior to the Nasta'líq.

Pl. VIII is peculiar in one respect. The letter و, which in other inscriptions stands above the line, is in every instance kept on the line. The long stroke of the initial *sín* also in the last word of the upper line is very unusual on inscriptions. Compare also the inscription in Mr. Thomas's *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings*, p. 129. In the date [719], we have again قع, instead of قع, or قع.

Atak.

Mr. J. G. Delmerick sent the following two inscriptions. The first is on the fort of Atak—

* قلعه اٹک *

سر شاهان عالم شاه اکبر * تعالیٰ شانه الله اکبر

سنه ۹۹۱ هجری

The chief of the kings of the world, Sháh Akbar, elevated is His dignity, Alláhu Akbar. A. H. 991. [A. D., 1583].

The Akbarnámah (Lucknow Edition, III, p. 335) has the following passage among the events of the 26th year of Akbar's reign, which lasted from the 5th Çafar, 989, to the 14th Çafar, 990, or from 11th March, 1581, to 10th March, 1582, A. D.

“To the events of this year belongs the resolution of his Majesty
“to build Fort Aṭak Banáras, which he thought might conveniently
“be commenced the next time that the imperial camp should come
“to that district. The foundation was laid by his Majesty in person
“on the 15th Khurdád, two g'harís after midday; and the fort was
“called by him Aṭak Banáras, so that its name might correspond
“to Kaṭak Banáras (Cuttack, in Orissa), which forms the eastern
“boundary of the realm. The building was superintended by
“Khwájah Shamsuddín Khawáfí, who had recently come from
Bengal.”

For a biographical notice of Khwájah Shamsuddín, *vide* Aín translation, p. 445. Badáoní (II, 293) also says—“In the month
“of Rabí' II. of this year (989), Fort Aṭak Banáras was founded,
“as the point opposite to Kaṭak Banáras.” The month of Rabí' II, 989, lasted from the 5th May to 2nd June, 1581. The above date (991) seems therefore to refer to the completion of the fort.

The metre of the inscription is short Hazaj (*mafá'ílun, mafá'ílun, fa'úlun*), the final *he* with its *zamm* in شانه counting as a long syllable.

Ma'rgalah.

Mr. Delmerick says that the Márgalah Pass was constructed about the time when Aurangzíb marched to Hasan Abdál, and sent on his son to chastise the Trans-Indus tribes. The inscription is—

* مارگله *

خان قوی پنجه مہابت شکوه * شیر ز سر پنجه او ناتوان
گفت مغل رومی تاریخ شان * ناصیہ مہوش ہندوستان
سنہ ۱۰۸۳ ھجری
باہتمام میرزا محمد داروغہ و احمد معمار اوستان و جوگیداس و
دیپی داس تحویل دار

The Khán of strong hand, and of exalted dignity, the lion is powerless to overcome his strong hand.

Mughul Rúmí composed the chronogram, *'Náçiah i mahwash i Hindústán*, the moon-like forelock of Hindústán, A. H. 1083 [or, 1672, A. D.].

The inscription seems incomplete. The year 1083 commenced unlucky for Aurangzíb; for on the 12th Muharram, 1083, or 28th April, 1672, the news reached him of the total defeat of his troops under Muhammad Amín Khán in the Khaibar Pass, a defeat which the author of the *Maásir i 'Álamgíri* (p. 117) compares with that of Akbar's troops under Zain Khán and Rájah Bír Bar.

The metre of the inscription is *mufta'ilun, mufta'ilun, fá'ilán*.

Majherah.

Mr. A. Cadell, C. S., sent two interesting inscriptions of the tombs of two Sayyids of the Bárha clan,* which still exist in Majherah, Muzaffarnagar, N. W. P. The first inscription mentions 967 as the year in which Sayyid Chhajhú (Aín, p. 477) died; but the inscription is too incomplete and unmetrical for publication. The second is taken from the tomb of Sayyid Mahmúd of Bárha (Aín, p. 389), and is in Arabic—

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ الْوَفِيِّ الصَّفِيِّ الْهَاشِمِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ
 وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْمَتَّاعِينَ بِآدَابِهِ اللَّهُ الْبَاقِي وَهُوَ الْمَكْمُودُ فِي كُلِّ فَعَالِهِ
 تَوْفِي الْأَمِيرِ الْكَبِيرِ الْمَرْحُومِ الْمَغْفُورِ الْمُبْرُورِ الْوَاصِلِ إِلَى جِوَارِ
 رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ الْمَلِكِ الْمَذَانِ السَّيِّدِ مَكْمُودْخَانِ صَاحِبِ الطَّبْلِ وَالْعِلْمِ
 فِي زَمَانِهِ تَغْمِدُهُ اللَّهُ بِغَفْرَانِهِ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْخَمِيسِ السَّادِسِ مِنْ أُخْرَى
 الْجُمَادِيِّينَ بِسَنَةِ اثْنَى وَثَمَانِينَ وَتِسْعِمِائَةٍ مِنْ سَنَةِ الْهِجْرَةِ النَّبَوِيَّةِ*

In the name of God, the merciful, the clement. O God, bless the prophet, the faithful, the pure, of the family of Hášhim, Muhammad, and his family, and his friends who were instructed in his manners. God is everlasting and praiseworthy in all His doings.

The great Amír, who is pardoned and rendered pure, and has reached the vicinity of the mercy of God, the favor-bestowing king, Sayyid Mahmúd Khán, a lord of the drum and the flag in his time, died—may God cover him with His pardon—in the night of Thursday, 6th Jumáda II., 982, [or, 23rd September, 1574, A. D.]

* Aín translation, p. 390.

Regarding the original domicile of the Bárha clan, Mr. Cadell writes as follows—

‘A Kundlíwal—the tribe to which S. Mahmúd belonged—told me that he had been in Patiálá when in service in the Panjáb, and that he had gone to see the cradle of his race. He says that the true name is Chatbánúr, now a large town with several thousand Sayyids. In Kundlí there are only a few huts. Tihanpúr is a pretty hamlet; but Jagner is uninhabited.’

To the list of Bárhà Sayyids, on p. 392 of the *Aín* translation, the following may be added—Sayyid Qásim, son of S. Diláwar, (Tuzuk, pp. 159, 163); S. 'Izzat Khán (killed, Tuzuk, 246, 306); S. Muhammad 'Alí and S. Bahádur, sons of Saif Khán (Tuzuk, 87, 159); S. Kabír (do., 374); S. 'Abdussalám (do., 384; Pádisháhn., I, 125); S. Parwarish Khán (Pádisháhn., I, 185, 297); S. Mák'han, (Pádisháhn., I, 351, and Tuzuk, p. 188); S. 'Abdul Hádí, (Tuz., 325); S. Na'íb, (do., 310); S. Núrul Bahr Saif Khán, (Maás. 'Alam-gírí, p. 266).

Bareli.

Mr. A. S. Harrison, Bareli College, sent me the following inscription, which belongs to the Mírzáí, or Pádisháhi, Masjid, in the Mírzáí Mahallah, Bareli.

ساعی کار خیر عین الملک * ساخت مسجد بامر اکبر شاه
مومنان راست سال تاریخش * فاسجدوا خالصا لوجه الله

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'Ain ul Mulk who strives to do good works, built this mosque by order of the Emperor Akbar.

The chronogram for believers is given in the (Arabic) sentence *fasjidú kháliqan liwajh-illah* ‘prostrate yourselves sincerely before God,’ A. H. 987, [A. D., 1579].

Regarding 'Ain ul Mulk, who was one of Akbar's court doctors, *vide* *Aín* translation, pp. 480, 481.



